



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Rawlins Field Office  
P.O. Box 2407 (1300 North Third Street)  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-2407



In Reply Refer To:  
1790

September 8, 2005

Re: Scoping Notice - Creston/Blue  
Gap II Natural Gas Development  
Project Environmental Impact  
Statement

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed natural gas development project to be known as the Creston/Blue Gap II Natural Gas Development Project.

Devon Energy Corporation, et al., has indicated their intent to drill and develop oil and gas resources in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins and Rock Springs Field Offices, within Carbon and Sweetwater Counties, Wyoming. The proposed project is located within Townships 14 through 19 North, Ranges 91 through 94 West, 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian, Wyoming.

A scoping notice has been prepared for your review and information, both as an introduction to the proposed project and as a review of the basic procedures we intend to follow in the preparation of the EA. The scoping process is an opportunity for you to participate in the earliest phase of environmental assessment for the Creston/Blue Gap II Project. We encourage your input and comments on the project. Information and comments you provide will enable us to assess alternatives for consideration in the environmental assessment.

We are conducting scoping for 60 days. If you are interested in participating in the scoping process, we request that you respond by supplying your written or e-mailed comments or concerns about the proposed activity by November 7, 2005. Please submit your comments to:

Eldon Allison, Project Manager  
Bureau of Land Management  
Rawlins Field Office  
P.O. Box 2407  
1300 North Third Street  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301

E-mail: rawlins\_wymail@blm.gov

A link to the Scoping Notice will be posted on the Bureau of Land Management national homepage at:

[http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/state\\_info/planning.htm](http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/state_info/planning.htm)

Your response is important and will be considered in the environmental analysis process. If you do respond, we will consider your comments in the analysis for the project. Please note that public comments submitted for this scoping review, including names, e-mail addresses, and street addresses of the respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentially. If you wish to withhold your name, e-mail address, or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this plainly at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Thank you again for your interest in this process. If you have any questions regarding the project, your role, or our responsibilities, please contact Eldon Allison, Project Manager, at the address shown above or phone (307) 328-4291.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Stoyer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Field Manager

Enclosure

**PUBLIC SCOPING NOTICE  
FOR  
CRESTON/BLEU GAP II NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE**

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL**

Devon Energy Production Company, LP (Devon) has notified the United States Department of Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins Field Office (RFO), that Devon and other operators, including Anadarko, Anderson Oil Company, Cornerstone Natural Resources, Petrogulf, Questar, Yates, and BP America intend to drill additional exploration and development wells in the Creston/Blue Gap II Project Area (CBGIIPA). The proposed CBGIIPA is generally located in Townships 14 through 19 North and Ranges 91 through 94 West, in Carbon and Sweetwater Counties, Wyoming, as shown in the Exhibit 1. The project area is entirely within the Rawlins Field Office management area.

The CBGIIPA presently contains several active fields which are predominantly spaced at eight wells per section for drilling in the Lance, Lewis, and Mesaverde Formations. In addition, this area contains several active Federal Units, some of which are subject to current drilling programs. The CBGIIPA has active producing wells, with accompanying production-related facilities, roads, and pipelines. The project area consists of approximately 184,000 acres, with surface ownership of 71% federal, 26% private, and 3% State of Wyoming. Devon and the other operators estimate surface disturbances of 4,606 acres (2.5% of project area) initially, and 2,606 acres (1.4% of project area) life-of-project.

The BLM has advised Devon and the other operators that an environmental impact statement (EIS) of the proposed development project will be necessary.

For purposes of conducting an environmental analysis, Devon and the other operators have indicated that an additional 1,250 wells at 1,000 well locations may be drilled in the CBGIIPA. Some of these wells may be classified as exploration or delineation wells because natural gas production potential has not been fully defined due to geological complexities. Where production potential is better known, wells would be classified as in-fill or development wells. Drilling is expected to last for approximately 10 to 15 years, with a life-of-project (LOP) of 30-50 years.

The Creston/Blue Gap II Area is currently accessed by an existing road network developed to service existing drilling and production activities. The drilling of any additional wells within the analysis area would require the construction of additional roads. The gas produced within the analysis area would be transported by existing pipelines and new pipelines, including new gathering lines with tie-ins to existing interstate pipelines. Additional new compression and produced water injection wells/evaporation pits are also proposed.

**RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Great Divide Resource Management Plan** - The Great Divide Resource Management Plan (GDRMP) (November 8, 1990) provides management direction for resources contained within the Rawlins Field Office area. The objective for management of oil and gas resources, as stated in the GDRMP, is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. This RMP is currently being revised under the title of Rawlins Resource Management Plan. A Draft EIS for the Rawlins RMP was released in December 2004. The completion date of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS

is uncertain at this time. A decision for the Creston/Blue Gap II Natural Gas Project (C/BG2 Project) will not be made nor implemented until after a Record of Decision is issued for the Rawlins RMP FEIS.

**Creston/Blue Gap Natural Gas Project Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (USDI-BLM 1994a)** was approved on October 4, 1994, and provides an analysis of the environmental consequences of a proposed natural gas development project in the same area as the proposed project. The BLM's decision allowed a maximum of 275 wells on 250 locations on a 160-acre spacing pattern.

**Continental Divide/Wamsutter II Natural Gas Development Environmental Impact Statement (USDI-BLM 1999a)** includes the Continental Divide area combined with the GWA II area. The combined project area is generally located in Townships 15 through 23 North, Ranges 91 through 99 West, in Sweetwater and Carbon Counties, Wyoming. The total combined area encompasses approximately 1,061,200 acres. This project is located west and north of the CBGIIPA.

The CD/WII EIS provides an assessment of environmental impacts associated with development of 3,000 natural gas wells. Based on that assessment, the BLM approved development of up to 2,130 wells, 50 percent on federal lands within the project area, beginning in 1999 and continuing for approximately 20 years, with a project life of 30 to 50 years. Various associated facilities (e.g., roads, pipelines, power lines, water wells, disposal wells evaporation ponds, compressor stations, etc.) would also be constructed.

**Desolation Flats Natural Gas Field Development Project Environmental Impact Statement (USDI-BLM 2004)** was approved on July 27, 2004. This natural gas development project area is generally located in Townships 13 through 16 North and Ranges 93 through 96 West in Carbon and Sweetwater counties. The total project area includes approximately 233,542 acres.

This EIS provides analysis of environmental impacts in the Desolation Flats project area, with development activities beginning in 2004 and surface disturbing activities continuing for 20 years. Natural gas production is estimated to span 30 to 50 years. Approved project components include 385 wells located on 361 locations with associated roads, pipelines, and ancillary facilities. Total new project related short-term disturbance is estimated at 4,923 acres.

**Use Authorizations** - Use authorizations (i.e., rights-of -way, permits, etc.) for roads, powerlines, pipelines, and well site facilities would be processed through the BLM Application for Permit to Drill (APD) and Sundry Notice permitting process.

**Lease Stipulations** - Some leases within the proposed area include special stipulations on occupancy. These are in addition to the standard lease terms. These stipulations are designed to protect surface resources such as soils, water, and wildlife by restricting periods of activity and areas of disturbance. Application of these lease stipulations will be handled on a case-by- case basis for each APD submitted to the BLM.

## **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT COMPLIANCE**

On reviewing the Operator's proposal, the BLM has determined that permitting this project would constitute a major federal action that could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Pursuant to NEPA and Council on Environmental Quality regulations on implementing NEPA, the BLM is preparing an EIS that will describe and evaluate the probable impacts of the Creston/Blue Gap II Proposed Action and alternatives. The purpose of an EIS is to provide the public and decision-makers with sufficient information to understand the environmental consequences of the proposal and to identify and develop appropriate mitigation measures to minimize environmental impacts.

One element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to:

- identify reasonable development alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS;
- identify environmental/socio-economic issues of concern related to the proposed project; and
- determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the EIS.

Additionally, NEPA requires that a “no action” alternative be considered in all environmental documents. This will allow a comparison of the economic and environmental consequences of the proposed and alternative development levels versus current development levels and existing environmental conditions. The No Action Alternative would deny the proposal as submitted but would allow consideration of individual APDs and ROWs on federal lands on a case-by-case basis through individual project and site-specific environmental analyses. “No Action” in the context of this analysis does not evaluate leasing nor the elimination or modification of existing leases. Operational activities relating to the existing oil and gas development would continue as authorized including transportation of natural gas products, maintenance activities and reclamation work. Additional gas development could occur on State and private lands within the project area under APDs approved by the WOGCC.

This scoping statement has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document and the BLM encourages public participation.

## **IDENTIFIED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The following issues and concerns have been identified by the BLM to date. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather a starting point for public input and a means of identifying the resource disciplines needed to conduct the analysis.

- potential impacts to wildlife habitats within the analysis area, including big game crucial winter range, sage grouse, and raptors
- road development, Increased traffic and associated impacts on existing County, State, and BLM roads
- social and economic impacts
- impacts to surface and groundwater resources, including sedimentation/salinity to the Colorado River system
- potential impacts to steep slopes and sensitive soils within the project area
- impacts from emissions resulting from additional drilling and production activities
- reclamation of disturbed areas and control of noxious weed invasions
- potential conflicts with livestock management operations in the analysis area, including possible impacts to range improvements
- potential impacts to cultural and historical values within the analysis area
- potential impacts to Native American sacred sites and Traditional Cultural Properties

*Scoping Statement - Creston/Blue Gap II Natural Gas Development Environmental Impact Statement*

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- potential impact to listed, or proposed for listing, plant and animal species, including potential Colorado River depletion and effects of downstream listed fish species
- cumulative effects of drilling and development activities when combined with other ongoing and proposed developments on lands adjacent to the Creston/Blue Gap II project area
- impacts to recreation
- potential impacts to paleontological resources
- impacts to wild horses in or near the project area
- Visual Resource Management and potential impacts within or adjacent to the Creston/Blue Gap II project area

**INTERIM DRILLING ACTIVITIES**

While the Creston/Blue Gap II environmental analysis is being conducted, the BLM may allow limited drilling of directional wells within the proposed project area. Also, approved APDs may be “traded” for a new APD at a different location. Interim drilling will be monitored by the BLM to ensure activities do not adversely affect the environment or prejudice the completion of the Creston/Blue Gap II environmental analysis.

**TIMING NEEDS OR REQUIREMENTS**

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encouraged to participate during the scoping process to help identify the scope of the analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigative opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Your comments are due by November 7, 2005. Please submit your comments to:

Eldon Allison, Project Coordinator  
Bureau of Land Management  
Rawlins Field Office  
1300 North Third Street  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-4376

Email: rawlins\_wymail@blm.gov  
(Please refer to Creston/Blue Gap II in your email response)

A Public Meeting to discuss the proposed project has been scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. on the following date and location.

**October 13, 2005**  
Jeffrey Memorial Community Center  
315 West Pine Street  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The following individuals and organizations will receive a copy of this scoping statement:

### **FEDERAL OFFICES**

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Department of the Interior`           | Geological Survey                             |
| Bureau of Land Management             | Army of Corps of Engineers                    |
| Bureau of Reclamation                 | Environmental Protection Agency               |
| Representative Barbara Cubin          | Fish and Wildlife Service                     |
| Senator Mike Enzi                     | Forest Service                                |
| Senator Craig Thomas                  | Department of Energy                          |
| Natural Resource Conservation Service | DOI Office of the Solicitor                   |
| Minerals Management Service           | Federal Energy Regulatory Commission          |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs              | Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance |
| National Park Service                 | Office of Surface Mining                      |
| Federal Highway Administration        |   |

### **STATE AGENCIES**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Governor  | Wyoming Game and Fish Department           |
| State Engineer's Office                             | Water Development Commission               |
| Wyoming State Planning Coordinator                  | State Representatives                      |
| Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality         | Wyoming Department of Transportation       |
| Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission         | Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office |
| Office of State Lands and Investments               | Wyoming Department of Agriculture          |
| Wyoming State Geological Survey                     | Department of Revenue, Ad Valorem Tax      |
| Little Snake Conservation District                  | Wyoming Business Council                   |
| Wyoming Board of Outfitters and Professional Guides | Wyoming Recreation Commission              |
| Wyoming State Forestry                              | Wyoming State Trails Program               |
| Wyoming Travel and Tourism                          | Wyoming Public Service Commission          |
| Wyoming Water Development Commission                | Wyoming Livestock Board                    |
| Wyoming State Engineer's Office                     | Wyoming State Grazing Board                |
| Wyoming Department of Employment                    | Sweetwater County Conservation District    |
| Wyoming Pipeline Authority                          |  |

### **COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Carbon County Commissioners          | Carbon County Planning Commission           |
| Sweetwater County Commissioners      | Sweetwater County Planning Commission       |
| Carbon County School District #1     | Carbon County Cooperative Extension Service |
| Sweetwater County School District #1 | Sweetwater County Solid Waste #2            |
| Carbon County Library System         | Sweetwater County Library System            |

### **MUNICIPALITIES**

|                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Town of Baggs   | Town of Wamsutter          |
| City of Rawlins | City of Rock Springs       |
| Town of Dixon   | Baggs Solid Waste District |

**NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES**

Eastern Shoshone Tribe  
Northern Arapaho Tribe  
Ute Tribe  
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe  
Crow Tribe

Northern Cheyenne Tribe  
Oglala Lakota Nation  
Rosebud Sioux Tribe  
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

**GRAZING PERMITTEES**

4-Mile Sheep  
Adams and Adams  
Andy and Argie Peroulis  
Three Forks Ranch Corp.  
Purple Sage, LLC  
Sheehan Ranches  
Mike and Doug Sheehan  
Three Mill Iron Ranch  
Robert Orchard  
Ladder Livestock Co., LLC  
James L. Jr., and Patricia Ann Chant  
Fill-more Beef, LLC

Matt and Sherry Weber  
H. Lee  
Montgomery Livestock Co.  
Sam Morgan  
Lee and Donna Jons  
John and Sons Peroulis  
Stratton Sheep Company  
Rock Springs Grazing Association  
Ray and Kathleen Weber  
Rodewald Grazing Assoc., LLC  
Salisbury Livestock Co.

**LEASE AND ROW HOLDERS**

Anadarko E & P Company LP  
Cornerstone Natural Resources, LLC  
BP America Production Co.  
Colorado Interstate Gas Company  
Questar Pipeline Company  
CNG Producing Company  
Double Eagle Petroleum & Mining Company  
D. B. Hillman  
Carol Ann Hoffman  
Lario Oil and Gas Company  
William Moss  
Don Parsons  
Petrogulf Corporation  
Quantum Geophysical  
Samson Resources Company  
Texaco Exploration and Production, Inc.  
Union Pacific Wyoming Gathering, Inc.  
Veritas DGC Land, Inc.  
WYGAP  
Yates Petroleum Company  
Forest Oil Corporation  
W.A.. Moncrief Jr.  
Corbin J. Robertson  
Irwin Rubenstein

Anderson Oil Company  
Questar Exploration and Production Co.  
Williams Gas Processing Company  
Westport Oil and Gas Company, Inc.  
Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation  
Devon Energy Corporation  
H.B. Hillman Trust  
HLR, Trust  
William E. Jeffers  
J.H. Marshall II Trust  
Northern Geophysical  
Phillips Petroleum Company  
Plains Petroleum Operating Company  
John B. Roden Jr.  
T.H. McElvain Oil and Gas, Ltd.  
True Oil Company  
Union Pacific Resources Company  
Arthur W. Winter Trust  
Wyoming Exploration, Ltd.  
Estate of Lillie M. Yates  
John P. Strang  
Costilla Energy, Inc.  
Lamar B. Roemer

**LANDOWNERS**

All private landowners are included under one of the above categories.



**LOCAL MEDIA**

Casper Star-Tribune  
Rocket Miner - Rock Springs  
Green River Star  
KRAL/KIQZ - Rawlins  
KQSW/KRKK/KSIT - Rock Springs  
KUWR - University of Wyoming  
Meeker Herald Times/Rangely Times  
KMKX - Rock Springs  
KYCS - Rock Springs  
KGWC CBS 14 - Casper

Rawlins Daily Times  
Wyoming State Tribune/Eagle  
KRAI - Craig, Colorado  
Moffat County Morning News  
KTWO TV/KTWO Radio - Casper  
Northwest Colorado Daily Press  
Craig Daily Press  
KUGR - Green River  
KFNB TV - Casper  
KCWY TV - Casper

**OTHER AGENCIES, INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES, INDIVIDUALS, AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Audubon Society  
Wilderness Society  
The Nature Conservancy  
Wyoming Association of Professional Archeologists  
Rock Springs Grazing Association  
Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States  
Environmental Defense  
Public Lands Advocacy  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Stockgrowers Association  
Wyoming Wildlife Federation  
Carbon County Coalition  
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance  
Defenders of Wildlife  
ISPM & B  
Predator Project  
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
American Horse Protection Association  
Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, Inc.  
Oil and Gas Accountability Project  
Western Ecosystems  
Alliance for Historic Wyoming  
Wyoming Natural Diversity Database  
Rawlins Downtown Development Authority  
Three-Shot Sage Grouse Foundation  
Friends of the Red Desert  
Wyoming Outfitters Guide Association  
Sweetwater Wildlife Association  
OCTA  
Southwest Wyoming Mineral Association  
Southwest Wyoming Industrial Association  
Western Watersheds Project  
People for the West  
Grouse Inc.  
Wild Horse Organized Assistance  
Natural Resources Defense Fund

National Wildlife Federation  
Carbon County Stockgrowers  
Field Museum of Natural History  
Wind River Multiple Use Advocates  
Wildlife Management Institute  
University of Wyoming, Geology Museum  
Petroleum Association of Wyoming  
Sierra Club  
Wyoming Outdoor Council  
Wyoming Woolgrowers Association  
Dolar Oil Properties  
Wyoming Business Alliance  
Sinapu  
Wyoming Advocates for Animals  
Animal Protection Institute  
Wildlife Habitat Council  
Public Lands Foundation  
The Fund for Animals/Animal Welfare Institute  
Hooved Animal Humane Society  
Wildlife Management Institute  
Wyoming Conservation Alliance  
Wyoming Association of Municipalities  
Land and Water Fund of the Rockies  
Izaak Walton League  
North American Pronghorn Foundation  
Motorized Recreation Council of Wyoming  
Wyoming Sportsman's Association  
Wyoming Wilderness Association  
Western Wyoming Mule Deer Foundation  
Western Wyoming Archeological Services  
Rock Springs Chamber of Commerce  
Sweetwater County Historical Society  
Wyoming People for the USA  
Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum  
National Wild Horse Association  
American Mustang Association  
Whole Horse Institute

*Scoping Statement - Creston/Blue Gap II Natural Gas Development Environmental Impact Statement*

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Approximately 20 additional “Other Agencies, Industry Representatives, Individuals, and Organizations” received a copy of the Scoping Notice.

